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AUTHOR Cogan, John J.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This report is the result of a 2-year study of three ethnic specific schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul (Minnesota). Key informants and public policy makers were interviewed during the first year of the study. In the second year, the parents and teachers at the three schools were both surveyed and interviewed. In all three schools, a sense of accomplishment and anticipation of continued progress characterized the end of the first 2 years. In each case, establishment of the school was a product of community politics. The sense of community, the conscious incorporation of the community's values, and the conceptualization of school and community as synonymous are important aspects of all three schools. Information gathered in the study provides no evidence to categorically support or refute criticisms that ethnic specific programs are incompatible with multiculturalism. The future of ethnic specific schooling raises provocative social, ethical, and political questions facing American education in the late twentieth century. (SLD)

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Three Ethnic Specific Schools in the Twin Cities: Making Desegregation a Choice?

by John J. Cogan, Antoinette Errante, and Kathryn Rentel

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Since 1990, a growing number of cities across the country have established ethnic specific schools. Schools that give primary attention to the needs of one specific ethnic or racial group have been introduced in Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Baltimore, and New York. Los Angeles, San Diego, and Memphis are actively considering this new approach to educating students of color. While programs in these cities differ widely in their scope and approach, they were all established in response to the lack of academic success, of cultural pride, and of self-esteem that students of color experience in "mainstream" classrooms. These missing pieces have been cited as the driving cause behind disturbing levels of drop-outs, low achievement, teenage pregnancy, homicide, and violent death among students of color.

Locally, 1991 marked the year in which the Twin Cities opened the Afrocentric Educational Academy and Four Winds School in Minneapolis and the Mounds Park All Nations Magnet School in St. Paul. This report is the result of a two-year study of these three ethnic specific schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

After a thorough review of existing research and newspaper and popular press reports on the issue, key informants were identified from these sources. These people, primarily those involved in establishing the three schools and public policy makers, were interviewed during the first year of the study. In the second year, the parents and teachers at the three schools were both surveyed and interviewed. The school principals were also reinterviewed and all the interviews were taped and transcribed so that they could serve as data sources.

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We learned that local proponents of ethnic specific schooling charge that the public schools are failing their children. The only option left, they contend, is pulling children out of environments where they are not succeeding and putting them into schools where they might have a better chance. They maintain that court-ordered desegregation has not achieved its goals and that other methods must now be attempted lest another generation be lost. Advocates argue that any program which can reverse the current situation ought to be given a chance.

Opponents of ethnic specific schooling, on the other hand, are equally vocal in their condemnation of "racially identifiable" programs or schools, contending that this is a major step backwards in the face of hard won civil rights legislation and court ordered integration during the past four decades. They maintain that such schooling will hinder further progress in the civil rights of ethnic and racial minorities in the United States. Most of these educators and community leaders have spent their professional lives championing the causes of distributive justice and equality of educational opportunities. They have dedicated themselves to creating public schools where all can grow and develop to their fullest potential and they maintain steadfastly that only schools that all youth can attend will ensure equality.

Both sides admit that desegregation has not delivered on its promises for quality school experiences for all. The ethnic specific programs force a re-examination of the concepts of desegregation and integration, suggesting that the first does not necessarily bring about the second and that children of color and their education, caught somewhere in between, have been the losers. These programs also argue the need to continue exploring the meaning of a multicultural society in a specifically American context.

Entangled in the desegregation question is the issue of parental and student choice. Ethnic specific schools, whether they are public or private, generally attract their populations through parents and students opting to enroll. This is definitely the case for the majority of students who attend the three Twin Cities' programs. The schools offer something that parents believe is important and that students are not getting in their assigned or neighborhood school. Yet the choice of resegregated schools appears to be diametrically opposed to the concept of equality of educational opportunity through desegregation. Thus the ethnic specific schools raise provocative social and political issues. But in the eyes of teachers and parents these issues remain secondary to the vitally necessary improvement of minority children's education, their sense of self worth, and pride in their cultures.

The Afrocentric Educational Academy

"It takes a whole village to raise a child."

In December 1990, the Minneapolis Public Schools' Board of Education voted to implement a two-year pilot program to develop an educational model for African American students that could eventually be used throughout the district. The purpose of the Afrocentric Educational Academy was threefold: 1) to ensure academic achievement and motivate students toward post-secondary education, 2) to build self-esteem and respect for traditional African American values, and 3) to develop instructional strategies that would eventually be translated into curriculum and staff development, district-wide.

The initiative for the academy came from parents, community members, and the school administration. Parents had formed an African American Task Force to work with the district to combat low academic achievement, and increasing social problems. Initially, parents had wanted to start an all-black alternative school connected to the district but with an independent board. Equally concerned by the disturbing demographics for African American students in Minneapolis, former Superintendent Robert Ferrera requested that Associate Superintendent Betty Webb lead an effort to coordinate parents' and the district's interests.

Webb recommended a separate program rather than a full-fledged school.

> "...in this particular situation, if we were to go with an alternative school, we would not have the capacity to impact the school district, which services 14,000 plus African American students."

The plan for the academy was developed and put into operation in just two months. African American students were drawn from two feeder schools: Franklin Middle School and Lincoln Fundamental School. Thirty-seven students were selected from an applicant pool of two hundred. The academy operates in the afternoon only. Students attend classes in their home school in the morning. The staff of two teachers come from the same schools. A storefront space on Olson Memorial Highway, close to both feeder schools, was donated by the W. Harry Davis Foundation to house the academy. Willarene Beasley, the first principal of the academy, describes its program:

> "We do all kinds of creative things. Sometimes we work with them by grade levels alone...we might work with them and group them according to gender—male or female, we might group them according to ability, or just randomly select a group of students. Sometimes students may be altogether in one group, sometimes they meet in a big workroom with the two teachers...The sixth grade teacher teaches math as well as the history, and the other teaches English, language arts, and history. We use an interdisciplinary approach, not just subject English per se, but when you're teaching English, you're also teaching history at the same time."

Philosophically, structurally, and methodologically the school is communal and cooperative.

> "We use a thematic, interdisciplinary approach, we have dream keepers, dream bearers, we work on integral components of the program, parental and family involvement. We also recognize a need for role models...."

The academy staff stress achievement and positive acculturation together as goals. According to teacher Grace Rogers, the school takes on the role of primary enculturator, building up and restoring a belief system and a repertoire of values, both cultural and social. Its purpose is to give back to students the wherewithal to move through and survive the dominant socio-cultural environment.

Though academic success, self-confidence, and cultural enrichment for the students are an important part of the academy's raison d' etre, its primary task is to examine African American students' learning styles, and to develop effective teaching strategies and support models. What works at the academy will then be disseminated throughout the district, helping African American students as well as other students. What is good for African American students will be good for all students, the staff believes.

Community effort aids in overcoming many of the everyday hurdles the academy faces. As part of their application for the academy, parents pledge to become actively involved. They are often asked to help out and their tangible responsibilities appear to have resulted in a feeling of empowerment about their children's education. The academy provides a mentor program in which African American adults, who come from all walks of life, are paired with individual students and work as a support system for them both in and out of school. All with whom we spoke saw this as an essential element of the program, especially as it relates to the development of self-esteem and cultural pride.

The academy values the wisdom of experience in the whole community and the expertise that can be found outside the traditional system. It's planners have relied on this to help build the school. Teacher Grace Rogers says,

> "The essence of the process is what is helping the dynamics, and it's really creating a living village that is an incentive for our children...that's what makes it very different. I think from among them we are

Cover photo: At the Four Winds School, teacher Duane Dentz helps Robbie Charette with his school work. Four Winds is an Indian and French magnet school focusing on academic excellence within a cooperative rather than a competitive learning model.

The Afrocentric Eduational Academy operates in the afternoon only and seeks to develop instructional strategies that can eventually be used in classrooms all across the district.

looking at people who are skilled but they don't necessarily have to have paper to verify their skill. They don't have to be university types; they can come from the community; they can be skilled and expenenced from their life expenence too."

Baseu on a perception of the school as a return to segregation, African American and white individuals as well as interest groups such as the Urban League, have voiced opposition or suspicion about the establishment of the academy. The local and national NAACP, too, were skeptical, but in acknowledging the problem's urgency, chose to withhold official judgment. Now in its third year, the academy has secured another desegregation waiver from the Minnesota State Board of Education. The public debate, though less vocal, continues.

Betty Webb argues that it is not in any way a violation of desegregation rules because it is not separate schooling but rather a programmatic extension of the services offered at the two feeder schools.

"...my position was we run segregated programs within schools...just like the gifted and talented program in either one of those two schools, which has been traditionally predominantly white. Just as other programs within those schools, special education which is overwhelmingly children of color."

Willarene Beasley noted that the school does not limit the application pool to African American students.

"This is not different than a magnet, where students are selected on the basis of their interest and their ability. We've always had separate programs: American Indian programs, English-as-a-Second Language for Asian students, adolescent pregnancy programs for girls who are pregnant...mother infant care programs, drug programs for students who use drugs, football sports for boys who play football...so I don't see this as unique."

To date the program has had only African American students and a few bi-racial students apply.

American Indian Magnet Schools

"Returning to the sacred circle"

As with African American children, achievement and self-esteem are very low among Indian children in mainstream schools. However, the movement to establish Indian schools has been different. Beside obvious cultural differences, American Indians point to differences in the history of their interaction with white society. The unique legal status of Indians distinguishes them from other advocates of ethnic specific education.

In the mid-1970s, the state legislature passed the Indian Education Act and the American Indian Language and Culture Act. The latter, especially, gave legislative force to the idea that Indian education should be different. David Beaulieu, former director of Indian education for the state of Minnesota explains:

"...in order for Indians to have an equal educational opportunity, an opportunity must be provided them to have their language and culture reflected in the schools they attend. Now that's a different definition of equal educational opportunity than we typically think of...we have often thought of equal to mean sameness... access to sameness....What that (act) essentially said is that in effective Indian education, sameness is not equal. That if you want to have an equal educational opportunity, if you're Indian, you have to have your particular language and culture reflected in the curriculum."

Despite earlier efforts, it became clear to the Indian community that the public system was not working for their children. A network of Indian administrators, educators, parents, and community leaders began to debate anew the purposes of Indian education. A group of Minneapolis Indian

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women, calling themselves the Daughters of Indian Wars, who were business/corporate and community leaders, targeted education reform as a goal. They requested and were denied an Indian magnet by then Superintendent Richard Green. Thereafter they organized to take the issue directly to the state legislature in an attempt to secure a wholly independent Indian school district.

At the same time the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education, with the support of the Indian Education Section of the Minnesota Department of Education, established the Indian School Council to study and propose reforms for Indian education. The Daughters of Indian Wars were excluded from participating in the council and considered this an attempt by the state to block their own legislation and recapture control of Indian education reform. Fierce lobbying took place by the state and the Indian community to influence the council's report. The daughters even promised to actively campaign against the governor's reelection if the state's representatives continued to testify against the independent district bill. The Council's final recommendation was in favor of an independent Indian district. Despite lobbying efforts, however, the bill was defeated. The politicization of the independent school district issue sensitized the entire Twin Cities to the state of Indian education. All involved agree that the eventual emergence of magnet schools was a direct result, some say a compromise, of that politicization.

Four Winds School

> "I would've died for just one teacher who was culturally sensitive and aware when I was a kid in Minneapolis suburban public schools. The kids know they can mention their reservations without ridicule, we can dance, we can celebrate, we can break those ugly cycles of abuse and poverty."
>
> —Four Winds teacher

In Minneapolis, unlike St. Paul, the duel of political wills between the Indian community and the political establishment moved from the legislature to the district. The district designated South High and Anderson Contemporary/Open School as Indian magnet programs within a few months of the defeat of the independent Indian district. The Anderson option was not satisfactory to the Indians. It was already devoted to three other programs and didn't have enough space for Indian children as well. Further, there was concern about whether the open school model would be effective with Indian children.

At this point, Noreen Smith and several other Indian women on the Indian Health Board convinced Robert Ferrera, Superintendent Green's successor, to consider a more comprehensive Indian magnet. Indian community members met regularly at the Indian Health Board to negotiate program details and coordinate with the school board. They pushed for a focus on academic excellence:

> "...I didn't want the culture to override the academics,...I feel culture is important, but what I've seen happen in some of the other schools is...the culture takes over the academics...I feel that if kids were going to survive, yes, they need academics, but at the same time they needed to feel good about themselves,...so that they could have a strong identity."
>
> —Noreen Smith, director of the Indian Health Board

The Indian community finally submitted a plan for a combined American Indian/French Immersion magnet as a compromise, so that the school would meet desegregation regulations. The state Board of Education granted a variance allowing 500 minority students out of a total capacity of 600. The planners overcame considerable resistance to the school by Phillips community residents and local businesses based in the Peavey Field area. They also negotiated with the Minneapolis Park Board to renovate the field and create a park adjacent to the school.

The school's planners sought community consensus and support because the integration of community and school is an essential element of the American Indian worldview and therefore of the school's philosophy. They wanted to bring service agencies into the classrooms to involve parents and elders in the school's work, and to include home visits by the teachers. The school is viewed as the natural nexus for integrating all of those elements.

In September 1991, the Minneapolis school district opened the Four Winds School, for grades K-8 in a renovated space previously occupied by Mount Sinai Hospital. The building was remodeled to incorporate traditional Indian themes and elements such as the circle medicine wheel. The image of the circle lies at the heart of the school. Values associated with the belief that we are all members of a circle meant that priority was given to the creation of a nurturing, safe environment focusing on a cooperative rather than a competitive learning model and emphasizing respect for others, tolerance of diversity, "pride but not blame and courage without hostility."*

> "...every child in the school is considered the child of everyone of us and so it's not 'your kid's being inappropriate' or 'I'm not going to mingle in with that child... because it's not a kid from my class.' Instead we look at the children and they know that every grown-up here is responsible for them."
>
> —Donna Grant, principal

The curriculum revolves around the whole language approach. The lines between the French immersion and the Indian magnets were intentionally blurred:

> "A third of the kids in the first three grades, this first year out, were assigned to French fluent teachers. They had half their day in French: Math, Science, and Social Studies, but they were taught the same content. The music teacher teaches English songs, French songs, Ojibwe songs, Dakota songs. So the French teachers go into the non-immersion classrooms and use a less immersion-oriented model to deliver French so all the children have some French.
>
> —Donna Grant

Grant indicated that her years of experience as an educator and administrator in the Minneapolis district were invaluable in meeting the challenges of the first year. Staff who did not bid in were recruited locally and nationally by Grant herself. Apart from actual teaching, teachers are responsible for restructuring mainstream curricula and developing new curricula to incorporate American Indian worldview, values, and spirituality, as well as Indian history, politics, and artforms.

Four Winds faced considerable behavior and discipline challenges the first year. Many of those challenges are typical of inner city schools. At Four Winds 92 percent of the students are on free or reduced lunches, 20 percent are special education students, and a considerable number of students were sent to the school as the last stop before expulsion from the system.

> "Urban poverty has to be considered to be one of the major influences, I think, that makes it so challenging and so draining. And I don't know how you fight that... I think a lot of the kids come in real angry and I would be angry too if I just had Doritos or whatever the night before."
>
> "In one kid's family there will be five or six or eight risk factors that ten years ago if a kid had one of those things going on in his life you were concerned."
>
> —Four Winds teachers

One teacher described their first year as a succession of "putting out brushfires." Behavior problems reached a critical level requiring radical restructuring. A set of school-wide norms for behavior were developed by the staff and posted. An in-school suspension room was created and students no longer changed classrooms, rather the teachers moved between rooms. Some language teachers were transferred into regular classrooms. Curriculum development is now focusing on creating a coherent repertoire of innovations that have been successful in the last two years. This goes hand in hand with new membership in the League of Accelerated Schools. According to Principal Grant, they are the first Minnesota school to participate in the nationally recognized program. The changes brought about a major turnaround; the school was far more tranquil, the working atmosphere greatly improved, and learning was no longer impeded by the behavior issue.

The second year, the school was much improved. The majority of the staff stayed on and a strong sense of trust, community, and identity emerged. The French immersion program attracted more students.

* From the Four Winds Teachers' Survey

Teachers' responsibilities were characterized as "overwhelming," but, despite this, teachers maintained:

> "...it's also a very nice place to work."

> "Staff are so committed. I've never seen such committed people, and it's just a joy to work with people like this."

> "I can't imagine myself being as happy working anywhere else as I am working right now."

Parent reaction to the school seems to be generally positive and involvement, especially for an inner-city school, is relatively high. The Indian Health Board provides child care and dinner to facilitate participation in the PTA. The school has a parent and community education room, where parents can go to spend time, to get help, to find out about what their children are learning, or to work on an interest or need of their own. Teachers try to be flexible and communicate with parents by phone or by home visits. Some teachers also write journals to the parents about their children. Parents said they felt welcome and that their input was needed. They believed that the school made an impact on their children in terms of language acquisition and cultural knowledge (both for Indian and non-Indian), learning "respect for people," "teaching goals," and "feeling intelligent at an early age."

At Mounds Park All Nations School, students gather for "circle time" in the common room which incorporates the image of the sacred medicine wheel. "All elements are contained within the circle, and all elements are equal within it," says Cornel Pewewardy, the school's principal. "For students who recognize the holistic unity, the natural forces of the universe inspire a wholeness of being."

Mounds Park All Nations School

In St. Paul, there was support from the school district in moving forward after the state legislature voted down the independent district. The St. Paul initiative was coordinated from within the district by Loretta Gagnon, then director for Indian education in St. Paul. With the support of the school board and the superintendent, she proposed a K-8 magnet school and coordinated the community initiative to investigate, organize, and establish All Nations School.

The model for the All Nations School was the Indian magnet school in Buffalo, New York, which had gained recognition as a national showcase program. Successfully serving both Indian and non-Indian students, the Buffalo school had demonstrated the benefits of Indian approaches in educating non-Indians and the benefits to Indian children of selected components from traditional schools. In approving its plans, the All Nations School deferred almost completely to the Indian Parent Advisory Committee recommendations. Indian community members worked with an architectural firm to remodel the building so that it would reflect American Indian cultural and historical themes. They incorporated the circle of life in the image of the sacred medicine wheel into its main assembly hall and the circle of stones outside the school, which is an important place for ceremony, celebration and reflection.

Dr. Cornel Pewewardy was hired as principal after much of the planning for the school was finalized. He focused on creating a vision for the school, shaping the curriculum, and gathering a group of dedicated teachers, elders, social workers, and other staff members. In leading a school immersed in Indian spirituality, one of his most important early and ongoing roles was to bring together the members of this circle into a caring, nurturing community.

> "The whole emphasis was on how each of us had gifts to offer and that we would all work together on that premise and that's how we'd work with the children too, that we would find good things in each child

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and bring them out, so he tried to do that with all of us so that all of us felt good about what we were doing, and then we would do that with the children."

"I have to say, as a person who came the second year and not the first, that that spirit, that subculture idea I guess you could say, for this building, this staff, was really strongly presented to me, that you are joining our circle, we believe in you, we are giving you the key to be free, and we want to facilitate your gifts that you contribute for the whole."

—All Nations teachers

Pewewardy introduced the school to the East Side community, both to individuals and base organizations that generally link with and support schools—local Little Leagues, churches, district councils, and others—as an important support network for the school. Pewewardy maintains that there are many voices who could and should be involved in developing a culturally responsive school.

In terms of curriculum, the goal was to unite American Indian philosophy and thought with cognitive science, holistic educational practices, and specific teaching methods for diverse learning styles:

"The traditional American Indian philosophy and thought is the knowledge base in designing an American Indian Magnet School.... [s]eeing the totality of a person's existence is the holistic view of education [which] represents a rebalancing of education practice away from its more than half century behaviorist/reductionist bent. [B]oth the Western [holistic] and American Indian methodologies recognize the interrelatedness of the physical, psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, and environmental factors that contribute to the overall quality of a person's life. No part of the mind, body or environment is truly separate and independent....[The school's curriculum assumes that] everyone can learn, provided teachers respond to individual learning needs.

—Cornel Pewewardy*

A teacher described the program as one in which the curriculum is enveloped by the culture. Content means not only American Indian history, culture, and language as discrete subjects, but blending American Indian approaches to language use, cooperative values, role modeling, child development, environmental consciousness, patience, and spirituality in the teaching of all content. Students are nurtured and instilled with a sense of cultural pride both through specific subjects and activities and also through a method of teaching that reinforces rather than undermines their identity.

The All Nations School, like Four Winds, is combined with another magnet, in this case the World Languages and Cultures magnet. The school is about half students of color, including Indian. Teachers point out that the two programs, in their emphasis on teaching from a cultural perspective, generally complement one another. The two programs, though separate, interact closely, sharing circle time, music and computers, schoolwide activities, and peer tutoring. Teachers feel their diversity enriches the environment for all students.

Prior to starting the year, neither magnet had a definitively established curricula; moreover teachers were hired late in the summer. Pewewardy shaped the school's general philosophy and underscored teachers' responsibilities for developing the actual curriculum and teaching methods. Together they sought to create sorely needed curriculum packets, audiovisual materials, texts, and the institutionalization of effective teaching methods. Similar to the other two magnets, teachers' responsibilities include site-based management. They cooperatively share daily management decisions as well as long term planning and budgeting.

"...You know I feel like I'm a professional. I'm being trusted to use my own judgment, to teach what I know is appropriate...and you know no one's checking to see what I'm doing..."

—All Nations teacher

Parents were encouraged to attend circle time, visit classrooms, speak with teachers, and volunteer. Parents feel a sense of ownership in the school. Parents participating in the study noticed changes in their children such as "honesty and respect," "control of temper and understanding of others' feelings." One parent said the school "made one child like school. The school is easier to deal with than other schools and gave children more confidence." Another said "my daughter has opened up socially and personally. Previously she attended a small private school which was very good with classwork but very stifling as far as social diversity."

As at Four Winds, discipline was an area of concern during the first year. Serving a high number of at-risk children, staff were not given an adequate support system or the human resources necessary to appropriately assist those children. The school was used as a "fresh start" for children whose behavior problems had left them few schooling alternatives. Teachers and other staff often spent time the first year managing or controlling rather than instructing their class. Just getting kids to school was a primary concern.

By the end of the second year noticeable progress had been made. School attendance improved dramatically. Parents noted more confident and respectful attitudes and behaviors in their children. Making headway against such behavior problems has been a result of the school's recognition that the well being of the student and the quality of the school experience are integrally linked to the well being of the child and the nature of the family and home experience. All Nations has encountered its educational path.

"I feel our path is walking the red road for educational synergy which actually is about whole brain learning. We can weave for example human perceptions, four-legged and winged creatures, and a living mother earth into a spiritual relationship. The red road is our path for gaining knowledge about the world in which we live, therefore wisdom is knowledge, rightfully applied and rightfully applied is what we're trying to define even within ourselves, knowing about what is real education and to us its a joy of service in the presence of the world and in the transformation from this world to the next world, that's the relationship."

—Cornel Pewewardy

Common Themes

In all three schools a sense of accomplishment and anticipation of continued progress characterized the end of the first two years. Each journey has been unique, yet some common themes present themselves.

First, the establishment of each school was a product of community politics both within the African American and American Indian communities and with the school districts, the public-at-large, and the state legislature. The Indian schools in both instances came about through a long process of debate within the Indian community, strong support from elders and the Indian community-at-large. Although not unanimous, consensus was strong. The St. Paul community appeared to have more initial district support than did the Minneapolis Indian community. It took more persistence and grass roots politics to create the Four Winds program.

The Afrocentric Educational Academy, like All Nations, was born through the initiative of the district administration and in response to parents' and community members' wishes. The African American community is more visibly divided regarding support for the AEA as the best educational alternative. However, near unanimous support exists for finding solutions to educating young African Americans, including the ultimate goal of staff development in all Minneapolis public schools.

The sense of community, the conscious incorporation of the community's values, and the conceptualization of school and community as synonymous is strong. Whether parts of the circle or members of the village, respect and responsibility for each other through a shared sense of community permeates the cultural ethos of each school. The schools are by, for, and about community. Their principals take an active role in nurturing the spirit of community among staff and students and between the school and other community members.

A visible culture of caring that reaches beyond academic achievement was present in all three schools. This was evidenced in everything from buying alarm clocks for students, staff gatherings combining work and

* From "Towards Defining a Culturally Responsive Pedagogy for American Indian Children: The American Indian Magnet School," in *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: A Step Beyond Multicultural Education*. Orlando, Florida: National Association for Multicultural Education, February, 1992, pp. 5 and 6.

appreciation, parents riding as monitors on the bus, dinner and child care at PTA meetings, to home visits by teachers. For teachers, principals, and parents, the school as a family and as part of a larger extended family was an essential characteristic of the program.

The principal's role in balancing leadership and cooperation appears to be a key one in each setting. Not only were the principals responsible for sowing and tending the seeds of community building, they also provided guidance and support for the logistic and curricular challenges that each program faced.

The principals at both the Afrocentric Educations Academy and Four Winds are veterans in the system and their experience was instrumental in successfully shaping the schools during the organizations stage. At All Nations, Pewewardy was a novice principal, hired after much of the planning for the school was completed. His lack of experience in the district and the lack of adequate supervisory support prolonged the resolution of the school's logistic and financial problems in the first year. On the other hand, Pewewardy's experience in higher education, and research with culturally responsible teaching and minority learning styles, has been a rich in-house resource for the All Nations staff.

The selection and role of the teachers has been as important as that of the principals. Administrators in all three schools were given freedom to hand pick a dedicated staff. Most importantly, the staff was selected from among teachers who wanted to work at the school specifically because of the nature of the program and who had a commitment to all of the programs' goals and ideals.

Inside the school the teachers have a broad range of responsibilities vital to the livelihood of the schools. Much of the business of education, be it daily management or long term development decisions, assessment or curriculum and staff development, is conducted on a collaborative basis by teachers or between teachers and administrators. With support from the principals, teachers are the primary innovators of curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessment. These responsibilities were highly valued despite the extra claims they created on already busy teachers. The teachers' roles in all three schools exemplify the cultural-community philosophies which underlie each program. They speak to the high level of professionalism and autonomy granted the teachers in these schools.

Ethnic Specific and Multicultural?

The information gathered in this study provides no evidence to categorically support or refute criticisms that ethnic specific programs are necessarily incompatible with multiculturalism. In both the Indian magnets there is clearly an interest in compatibility. Parents in both these schools voluntarily described their children's school experience as multicultural, not only in terms of the composition of the student population but also the schools' formal curricula, values, and socialization processes. Principals and teachers in both schools pointed to the American Indian cosmology which holds that all existence is part of the circle of life, and that we are caretakers (not owners) whose responsibility is to encourage survival and harmony of the planet. It is a worldview which fosters tolerance and respect for all living things.

The Afrocentric Educational Academy presents a somewhat different scenario. Unlike the two Indian magnets, which are paired with a second magnet program in a full school, the academy is small, homogeneous, and resembles a pull-out enrichment program. It is less clear how the Afrocentric program intersects, if at all, with multiculturalism. Some elements are clearly compatible with tenets of multiculturalism: respect, self esteem, and the concept of interdependence found in the village metaphor. When the program is eventually integrated into heterogeneous classrooms, it may be viewed as a "multiculturalizing element" within the broader curriculum, but only if it is not reduced again to a "Black History Month" approach.

While the schools continue their journey, disagreement continues over the best approach to solve the problems facing children of color and their communities. Some favor continuing to work totally within the existing structure of desegregation. Others believe it is critical that children of color receive more focused attention for all or part of the school day. General agreement exists that many alternatives must be tried. The Afrocentric Educational Academy and Four Winds have received new three-year desegregation waivers, thus all three ethnic specific programs have a commitment from their districts to see if these programs can make a difference.

Gene Mammenga, former Minnesota Commissioner of Education, felt strongly that it was important for these programs to have an opportunity to overcome the organizational challenges faced by any new school or program before they were judged on their ability to fulfill their more specific objectives. The commissioner wished to give the Minnesota Board of Education, and the American Indian and African American communities an opportunity to discuss whether the twenty-year-old desegregation guidelines were even still appropriate.

There were clearly sectors of both the African American and American Indian communities who believed that desegregation should not be imposed upon families. In the African American community, advocates of the Afrocentric Educational Academy felt forced busing has dismantled the community support system which was so effective historically in educating children for a successful life. The diasporic isolation of Indian children throughout school districts and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools has had similar effects. In a system which offers increasingly fewer positive learning experiences to children of color, many maintain that the academy and the magnet programs should be one of several options available to parents.

Desegregation and family choice policies approach the question of education from different perspectives. Those who favor desegregation believe it is impossible to build a racially and culturally tolerant society without providing (artificially if necessary) an integrated environment where children can interact from an early age. Yet as student tracking, suspension rates, and special education distributions have shown, the last thirty years of desegregation have not created a successfully integrated society. Advocates for ethnic specific schools argue that a successfully integrated society will never exist if those who have been historically marginalized on the basis of their race or ethnicity are prevented from building a strong sense of identity, which will improve their chances for achievement and, therefore, their contribution to society.

Finally, the debate in the media and official educational channels has failed to properly recognize the crucial issue of class as it relates to ethnic specific schools. In the last several years, not only have urban schools filled with young faces of color, they have also increasingly been populated by the urban poor, many of whom are white.

> "...the number of kids below the national average in any school building is no longer an indicator of the percentage of the students of color in the building but rather mirrors almost exactly the number of students in the building who are eligible for subsidized lunches. So we've seen a resegregation occur on class lines that still includes a disproportionate number of students of color. But the common denominator today is persistent poverty, rather than race, and we see a disproportionate number of students of color, females, but they are all virtually persistentlly poorer lower income children in those classes who are not meeting benchmark scores and other educational standards... That's the real crime that has motivated the magnet programs that have come from within the community rather than from the district..."
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> —Yusef Mgeni, director of the Urban Coalition

Middle and upper middle class families of all ethnic groups continue to use the means at their disposal to exit local urban schools and seek a better education for their children. Many ethnic specific schools recognize that they must combat the double burden of ethnic and economic marginalization if they are to guide their students to successful, meaningful futures.

The future of ethnic specific schooling raises some of the most provocative social, ethical, and political questions facing American education in the late twentieth century. In the end, though, in the eyes of teachers and parents such questions are a distant second to improving education for

children of color, indeed, for all children, by restoring their sense of self-worth and pride in their cultures, and providing them with the academic tools that will help them build their future as productive and healthy citizens.

John J. Cogan is a professor in the College of Education at the University of Minnesota. He is a specialist in comparative education with a special focus on research in citizenship education and global school reform issues. Antoinette Errante was a doctoral candidate in education at the University of Minnesota at the time of this study. She is now an assistant professor of education at Ohio State University in Columbus. She specializes in the history and sociology of education. Kathryn Rentel is a doctoral candidate in Comparative and International Development Education in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration, College of Education, University of Minnesota. **Professor Cogan wishes to extend special thanks to Josie R. Johnson, Associate Vice President and Provost of the University of Minnesota, for her help with the conceptualization and implementation of this study. Her counsel and support were invaluable.**

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A comprehensive bibliography of print sources on ethnic specific schools is available from Professor Cogan. To obtain a copy, contact him in writing at 159 Pillsbury Drive S.E. (Room 125A), Minneapolis, MN 55455-0208.